

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION IO-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 AF-04 EUR-08 SSO-00 NSCE-00 NSC-05
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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1539
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 KINSHASA 0889/1

LIMDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR CG
SUBJ: AMB YOUNG'S MEETING WITH PRES MOBUTU

REF: STATE 20633

1. WITH THE PROSPECT OF AMB YOUNG'S MEETING IN NIGERIA NEXT
WEEK WITH FONMIN NGUZA, AND PROBABLY MOBUTU AS WELL, I THOUGHT IT
MIGHT BE HELPFUL TO PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS WHICH
ATTEMPT TO CAPTURE MOBUTU'S CURRENT MOOD AS IT RELATES TO THE
UNITED STATES.

2. SUMMARY: I BELIEVE THAT MOBUTU LOOKS AT THE NEW ADMINISTRATION
IN WASHINGTON WITH SOME ANXIETY; HE HAS PROBABLY DEDUCED FROM SOME
OF THE RECENT SIGNS THAT THE CLOSE RELATIONS WHICH EVOLVED OVER
THE LAST YEAR OR SO WILL BE SUBJECT TO CAREFUL REVIEW AND PERHAPS SOM
E
ALTERATION. BUT HE IS NOT SURE. MOBUTU'S REACTION TO WHAT HE NOW
PERCEIVES AS AN AMBIGUOUS SITUATION IS TO ADOPT SOMEWHAT CONTRA-
DICTORY POSTURES VIA-A-VIS THE AMERICANS -- ONE WHICH ASSUMES THE
CONTINUED CLOSE RELATIONSHIP AND ANOTHER WHICH MAKES ALLOWANCE FOR
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CHANGES. IN THE MEETING WITH AMB YOUNG, THE FIRST MAJOR FIGURE
OF THE NEW ADMINISTRATION HE WILL ENCOUNTER, I THINK MOBUTU WILL
BE LISTENING AND LOOKING HARD FOR INDICATIONS OF OUR FUTURE
ATTITUDE TOWARD ZAIRE, AND HE WILL EXPECT TO ATILORHIS OWN FUTURE
ACTIONS ACCORDINGLY. END SUMMARY.

3. ANXIETY: THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT MOBUTU IS ANXIOUS, IF

NOT SOMEWHAT APPREHENSIVE, CONCERNING OUR FUTURE ATTITUDES AND POLICIES TOWARD ZAIRE. HE VIEWS 1976 AS AN EXCELLENT YEAR; NOT ONLY DID WE RESPOND TO ZAIRE'S NEEDS BY SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASING ECONOMIC AND SECURITY ASSISTANCE, BUT WE REPEATEDLY DEMONSTRATED HIGH-LEVEL SUPPORT FOR MOBUTU'S LEADERSHIP AT A TIME WHEN HE VERY MUCH NEEDED IT. NOW, HOWEVER, HE PERCEIVES A WHOLE NEW SET OF UNCERTAINTIES AS A NEW TEAM MOVES IN. WILL, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT TEAM CONTINUE THE CURRENT LEVEL OF ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT? WILL IT POSE NEW CONDITIONS FOR SUCH SUPPORT AS MOBUTU MIGHT FIND POLITICALLY DIFFICULT TO MEET? WILL IT PURSUE CURRENT PLANS FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE, INCLUDING COMMITMENTS FOR THE FY-77 MILITARY UPGRADE PACKAGE?

4. THE EXTENT OF MOBUTU'S ANXIETIES CAN READILY BE MEASURED BY SOME OF HIS RECENT ACTIONS. WHEN HE HEARD THAT CONGRESSMAN DIGGS HAD EXPRESSED OPPOSITION TO FURTHER MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ZAIRE DURING THE LESOTHO CONFERENCE, MOBUTU EXPRESSED HIS DEEP CONCERN TO ME AND EVERYONE ELSE WITHIN EARSHOT. A FEW HOURS AFTER OUR BREAKFAST WITH SEN CLARK, MOBUTU TELEPHONED ME SEEKING ASSURANCES THAT I TOO THOUGHT THE MEETING HAD GONE WELL. HE HAS CERTAINLY NOTED CAREFULLY RECENT PUBLIC STATEMENTS FROM WASHINGTON CONCERNING SECURITY ASSISTANCE, AND HE PROBABLY WONDERS ABOUT THE IMPORT OF AMB YOUNG'S REPORTED STATEMENT CONCERNING CUBANS IN ANGOLA AS A STABILIZING FACTOR. ALSO, I ESTIMATE THAT CERTAIN DEMARCHES WE HAVE RECENTLY UNDERTAKEN HERE --NOTABLY THE ONE QUESTIONING A RECENT FRENCH COMMUNICATIONS CONTRACT-- IS SEEN BY MOBUTU AS FORESHADOWING A TOUGHER US LINE ON FINANCIAL MATTERS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE UPCOMING IMF STABILIZATION PROGRAM.

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5. REASSURANCE: ON THE OTHER HAND, MOBUTU PROBABLY HAS BEEN ENCOURAGED BY RECENT HIGH-LEVEL MESSAGES FROM US. CERTAINLY, HE LOOKS AT AMB YOUNG'S INITIATIVE IN REQUESTING A MEETING AS A GOOD INDICATION THAT THE NEW ADMINISTRATION BELIEVES THAT ZAIRE CONTINUES TO BE IMPORTANT. IN ADDITION, HE PROBABLY ASSUMES THAT HIS CONSISTENT SUPPORT ON POSITIONS OF IMPORTANCE TO US IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS, AND THE SUPPORT HE HAS OPENLY GIVEN TO OUR INITIATIVES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, WILL, OR SHOULD, WEIGH HEAVILY IN THE BALANCE OF OUR CALCULATIONS. AND LASTLY, HE IS REASSURED BY HIS EUROPEAN FRIENDS, NOTABLY THE BELGIANS AND THE FRENCH, THAT THEY CONTINUE TO VALUE THEIR RELATIONS WITH ZAIRE AND WILL WEIGH IN WITH WASHINGTON ON MOBUTU'S BEHALF.

6. REACTION: TYPICALLY, MOBUTU WILL REACT TO THESE AMBIGUOUS SIGNALS AND ASSUMPTIONS BY ATTEMPTING TO BROADEN HIS OPTIONS, COVER HIS BETS, AND GENERALLY STRENGTHEN HIS POSITION TO MOVE IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS -- AND IN WAYS THAT WILL BE PERCEIVED AS HIS INITIATIVES AND NOT OURS. GOOD EXAMPLES OF THIS APPROACH ARE

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ACTION IO-06

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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1540
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 KINSHASA 0889/2

LIMDIS

TO BE FOUND IN RECENT REPORTING FROM MOBUTU'S CURRENT EUROPEAN TOUR: WITH NATO SECGEN LUNS (USNATO 438) AND WITH THE GERMANS (BONN 1798), MOBUTU TOOK THE LINE THAT HE WAS SURROUNDED BY SOVIET-DOMINATED OR INFLUENCED STATES, HAD SUFFERED ECONOMICALLY, MILITARILY AND POLITICALLY FROM THIS EXPOSED POSITION AND LOOKED TO THE NATO ALLIES, NOTABLY THE US, FOR CONTINUED SUPPORT AND COOPERATION. ON THE OTHER HAND, WITH BELGIAN PRIME MINISTER TINDEMANS (BRUSSELS 00887), MOBUTU WONDERED IF HE WERE NOT BEING PERCEIVED AS AN AMERICAN CLIENT AND SHOULD NOT THEREFORE PLACE SOME DISTANCE BETWEEN HIMSELF AND THE US. ONE COULD SPECULATE THAT MOBUTU WAS ONLY SAYING WHAT HE THOUGHT HIS INTERLOCUTORS WANTED TO HEAR. WHILE THERE IS USUALLY SOME TRUTH IN THIS, I AM INCLINED TO BELIEVE THESE SEEMING CONTRADICTIONS AGAIN REFLECT MOBUTU'S EFFORTS TO POSTURE HIMSELF FOR FUTURE CONTINGENCIES. HE WOULD LIKE TO CONTINUE HIS PRESENT RELATIONSHIP WITH US, WHICH HE VIEWS AS MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL, AND IN THIS CONTEXT HE WOULD BE WILLING TO GO ON PLAYING A SUPPORTIVE ROLE IN OUR SEARCH FOR A MODERATE SOLUTION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. AT THE SAME TIME, HOWEVER, HE WANTS TO REMIND US THAT SUCH A RELATIONSHIP IS NOT WITHOUT RISK IN TERMS OF ZAIRE'S OWN POSITION IN AFRICA AND THE THIRD WORLD. IN OTHER WORDS, AS MUCH AS ZAIRE NEEDS AND WANTS OUR HELP, ITS SUPPORT OF OUR OWN INTERESTS IN AFRICA AND ELSEWHERE SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED.

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7. APPROACH: IN THE MEETING WITH AMB YOUNG, I THINK MOBUTU WILL BE LISTENING AND LOOKING HARD FOR KEY INDICATIONS OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S ATTITUDES, AND HE WILL EXPECT TO TAILOR HIS FUTURE ACTIONS ACCORDINGLY. ALTHOUGH HE REALIZES POLICY REVIEWS ARE STILL UNDER WAY IN WASHINGTON, HE WILL NEVERTHELESS HOPE TO RECEIVE AT LEAST GENERAL CONFIRMATION THAT (A) WE VALUE OUR TRADITIONALLY GOOD RELATIONS WITH ZAIRE AS ONE OF AFRICA'S INFLUENTIAL MODERATES, AND CONSIDER MOBUTU TO BE AN IMPORTANT PLAYER ON THE AFRICAN SCENE; (B) WE WISH TO PURSUE OUR CLOSE CONSULTATIONS ON SOUTHERN AFRICA AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ISSUES; AND (C) WE INTEND TO FULFILL OUR EXISTING COMMITMENTS ON MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. I BELIEVE THESE ARE POINTS THAT IN FACT CAN AND SHOULD BE MADE TO MOBUTU AT THIS TIME. THEY WOULD SERVE TO ALLAY SOME OF THE ANXIETIES HE HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATING WITHOUT, HOWEVER, MOVING INTO THE AREA OF ANY NEW, SPECIFIC COMMITMENTS IN THE CONTEXT OF OUR FUTURE BILATERAL RELATIONS. AT THE SAME TIME, THEY WOULD STRENGTHEN THE BASIS FOR FURTHER DIALOGUE CONCERNING VARIOUS ASPECTS OF OUR RELATIONS, NO THE LEAST OF WHICH WILL BE THE GOZ'S OWN RESPONSIBILITIES IN EFFECTING ECONOMIC RECOVERY.

8. I WOULD BE PLEASED TO DISCUSS THESE POINTS FURTHER, TOGETHER WITH OTHER MATTERS THAT MIGHT BE COVERED WITH MOBUTU, DURING AMB YOUNG'S TRANSIT STOP IN KINSHASA FEB 7.

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